DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 638 RC 022 511

AUTHOR Guthrie, Steven P.
TITLE Outdoor Program Models: Placing Cooperative Adventure and Adventure Education Models on the Continuum.
PUB DATE 1999-11-00
NOTE 10p.; In: Proceedings of the 13th Annual International Conference on Outdoor Recreation & Education (Jackson Hole, WY, November 1-6, 1999); see RC 022 528.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Adventure Education; Clubs; College Programs; Experiential Learning; Higher Education; Individual Development; *Leadership Styles; *Models; Outdoor Education; *Participative Decision Making
IDENTIFIERS Common Adventure; *Facilitative Leadership

ABSTRACT

In two articles on outdoor programming models, Watters distinguished four models on a continuum ranging from the common adventure model, with minimal organizational structure and leadership control, to the guide service model, in which leaders are autocratic and trips are highly structured. Club programs and instructional programs were in between, with clubs nearer to common adventure programs, and instructional programs nearer to guided programs. This paper suggests that Watters' club model is better called a cooperative adventure model, and that adventure education is distinct from other instructional programs. Cooperative adventure provides leaders and some trip structure, while preserving many benefits of the common adventure model such as interpersonal cooperation, freedom of choice, self-reliance among participants, and participant decision making. Since organizations other than clubs use the cooperative model, and clubs are free to use any model on the continuum, Watters' club model would be better called the cooperative model. Adventure education is distinct from basic-skills training models because it goes beyond technical skills to include interpersonal skills, leadership, intrapersonal psychological growth, and areas such as self-confidence and self-esteem. Because they focus on experiential education, which assumes learners are actively involved in the learning process and decision making, adventure education programs are less directive than guided programs or technical skills-based programs. They would appear on the continuum between cooperative and instructional/school programs. Two figures depict Watters' continuum and the continuum proposed in this article. (TD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 443 638

OUTDOOR PROGRAM MODELS: PLACING COOPERATIVE ADVENTURE AND ADVENTURE EDUCATION MODELS ON THE CONTINUUM

Steven P. Guthrie

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Wm. R. Harwell
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

RCU225F1

OUTDOOR PROGRAM MODELS: PLACING COOPERATIVE ADVENTURE AND ADVENTURE EDUCATION MODELS ON THE CONTINUUM

Steven P. Guthrie

Author's Note: During the conference, Ron Watters presented a history of the Common Adventure philosophical model. During his presentation, he made reference to an unpublished paper I had sent him back in 1997. This paper is presented here as a complement to his presentation.

In two articles on the programming models used by outdoor programs, Watters (1986, 1987) distinguished essentially four program models and placed them on a continuum which ranged from the Common Adventure model (with minimal organizational structure and leadership control) to the Guide Service model (in which leaders are fairly autocratic and trips are highly structured). In between, he placed club programs and instructional programs, as follows:

Least Organizational Control			Most Organizational Control
Common Adventure	Clubs	Instructional/ School	Guided/ Packaged

A paradigm of the Guide Service model are catered rafting trips in which clients are merely along for the ride and have minimal responsibilities and no involvement in decision making. At the other extreme are Common Adventure trips which generally have no designated leader, no formal structure, are run democratically or consensually, and in which participants are free to do whatever they want.

Since a goal of Instructional Programs is to teach students skills, participants in Instructional Programs tend to be more involved in the overall process than in Guide Service trips. Due to their educational goals, Instructional and School Programs are necessarily fairly structured and tend to be primarily leader directed; on the other hand, clubs tend to be less structured, in part because their goals are more leisure or recreationally oriented. Clubs are more structured than Common Adventure programs, but less structured than Instructional or Guide Service programs.

Although his articles provide an excellent introduction to different program models, the continuum could be developed further; for there are two other program models which have been extant for several years, which were not explicated by Watters nor have been made clear in other literature-- these are the Cooperative Adventure Model and the Adventure Education Models.

The goals of this article are: 1a) to suggest that Watters' Club model is better called a Cooperative Adventure model; 1b) to explain briefly the Cooperative Adventure model; 2a) to make a distinction between two types of educational models (Instructional Programs and Adventure Education); and 2b) to place them separately on the Watters' continuum.

This article suggests modifications of Watters' conceptions of the continuum of outdoor program philosophies. For a more thorough understanding of the issues and the philosophies, one should refer to either of Watters' original articles. There is much in the originals which is not covered here.

RC 022541

I

The first change I propose is that what Watters calls the Club model would be more appropriately called a Cooperative Adventure model and I would distinguish the Cooperative Adventure model of program leadership from the Common Adventure model.

The Common Adventure Concept

Most private trips are common adventure trips. A common adventure trip is the trip people go on when they go out with a group of friends and acquaintances. In the late 1960s, the Common Adventure Trip Program was developed at the University of Oregon and spread to several colleges and universities around the West and Mid-west. The Common Adventure Outdoor Program model attempts to facilitate common adventure trips. A Common Adventure Outdoor Program expands the idea of common adventure trips among friends to assist people who may not know each other in getting together for trips. It essentially functions like a trip board by assisting in communication and encouraging/facilitating people with shared interests to go on Common Adventure trips.

I use the uncapitalized phrase "common adventure" to refer to common adventure trips not organized through an outdoor program and the capitalized phrase "Common Adventure" to refer to a trip facilitated by a Common Adventure Program. A key difference between typical common adventure trips and Common Adventure trips is that Common Adventure trips should not be "closed" trips. That is, they should be open to the general community, not just to a select group of friends or acquaintances. Trip initiators who try to set up closed trips are not functioning within the Common Adventure spirit or philosophy.

A Common Adventure Program will provide a trip board for trip initiators to initiate a trip; perhaps a meeting room for initiators to conduct planning meetings; typically a sign-up sheet to allow people to express interest in the trip and to allow initiators to contact interested persons; often resource materials (maps, guidebooks, lists of suggested equipment, handouts on first aid, hypothermia, frostbite, minimum impact, etc); and a clear philosophy of Common Adventure. Further, such a program will typically have outdoor equipment, and maybe a van, for trip members and organizers to rent.

It's important to realize the a Common Adventure Program will <u>not</u> in any way screen, vouch for, or certify initiators, because initiators are not the leaders. A crucial part of the Common Adventure philosophy is that the participants must understand roles and responsibilities of participants and trip initiators-- in particular they need to realize that initiators are not leaders; rather, every individual person in the group is responsible for their self and for leadership. Furthermore, all costs are shared equally-- initiators are not leaders, and deserve no special price breaks as leaders of their trip.

Common Adventure trips are, therefore, "leaderless" trips; that is, they have no formally designated leaders. And typically, participants in an established Common Adventure Program will rebel if any one person actively attempts to become "The Leader." Although there are no formally designated leaders, participants assume a variety of leadership roles. Consequently, informal leaders often emerge and some may be more influential than other participants. However, since there are no formal leaders, there is no one formally or legally responsible for the participants. Further, there are no rules, structure, or guidelines imposed on the participants by the Program. The only control exerted comes from governmental laws and regulations that any outdoor participant is expected to follow.

Thus a Common Adventure Outdoor Program provides a structure which facilitates the existence of Common Adventure trips, but the trips themselves are not formally structured; the only structure, if any, comes from the participants themselves as they work together (or maybe do not work together).

The Common Adventure model can be quite effective in regions where there is a large pool of skilled participants who desire to promote the activity by sharing their skills and knowledges with the less experienced. But it also requires a pool of participants who are comfortable with the non-structured leadership and learning environment provided by the Common Adventure model. The model is less likely to work where there is no pool of experienced practitioners willing to spend their time to share their knowledge; and those who are expecting formal, predetermined structure and designated leaders tend to be dissatisfied with the Common Adventure model. The Common Adventure model can be a good model for a club program (despite Watters' distinction between clubs and common adventure programs). This point is discussed below.

A major advantage of a true Common Adventure Program is liability. Because the institution exerts no control over leaders and trips and no person is in charge, the institution assumes no legal responsibility. It is important to be aware of the distinction between a Common Adventure *Program* and a Common Adventure *trip* which a program helps facilitate. From a liability perspective, the Program can receive institutional support. So long as leaders are not paid to lead trips, nor are they in any "vetted" (checked, monitored, trained by the program, then the program is probably protected from liability. However, if a program starts providing leaders, training or supervising leaders, or paying leaders to run the trips, then the trips, leaders, and program no longer receive protection from liabillty. They are then becoming what Rennie called "Cooperative Adventure" trips.

The Cooperative Adventure Concept

What was originally called the Cooperative Adventure Model evolved from the Common Adventure model. Rennie (1985) may have been the first to note the distinction between the two. He pointed out that some programs which were calling themselves "Common Adventure" were providing leaders with greater or lesser degrees of experience and training, and were giving incentives (subsidized expenses, access to free equipment, perhaps small stipends) for leaders to lead. (Of course, the nature of the incentive varied with the institution.) At the same time these programs were trying to preserve the benefits of the Common Adventure model-- interpersonal cooperation, the freedom of choice, self-reliance among the participants, and the need for responsible decision making by the participants. Rennie argued that those programs were no longer truly Common Adventure programs and suggested the term "Cooperative Adventure."

Some (Moss, 1996) go so far as to assert there are no true Common Adventure Programs extant in this country.

In addition to university programs which have evolved from the Common Adventure model, there are non-college outdoor programs which consciously set out to use a Cooperative Adventure model. These programs have active training of leaders and an organizational framework which encourages an active dynamic program. Watters cited some weaknesses (e.g., a need for active leadership, poor teaching, rigid structure) which have been seen in club programs. However, for the non-college club programs, the weaknesses of some club programs which Watters cited do not necessarily apply.

Common Adventure and Cooperative Adventure trips are both cooperative in nature. But Cooperative Adventure programs provide leaders (who have greater or lesser degrees of experience and training) and some trip structure, while at the same time preserving many of the benefits of the Common Adventure model.

One of the benefits a Cooperative Adventure program loses is protection from liability. By providing leaders, the institution assumes liability, which should be reduced through other means (waivers, clear warnings of risk to participants, Assumptions of Risk statements, training of leaders, etc.).

Elements of the Cooperative Adventure Concept

Not only do a number of college outdoor programs use the Cooperative Adventure philosophy, but also for reasons related to liability and to safety, the American Canoe Association Safety Committee has promoted the Cooperative Adventure concept, in place of a Guided model, for canoe and kayak clubs (Walbridge, 1986a, 1986b). The following description of some of the elements which are part of the Cooperative Adventure concept is adapted from a staff manual (Guthrie & Hutton, 1993).

In Cooperative Adventurer trips, a sponsoring agency initiates the trip and provides leaders who serve as "coordinators" or "facilitators." Nevertheless, all participants are expected to assume certain responsibilities. The particular responsibilities any individual assumes depends, in part, upon their experience and ability. The more experienced or able a person is, the more they may be able to contribute to the group.

In a Cooperative Adventure, participants are responsible for decisions such as the following. These are adapted from the ACA Whitewater Safety Committee's guidelines (Walbridge, 1986b):

1. The decision to go on a trip.
2. The decision to hike the selected trail, climb the selected route, boat the selected river, under the conditions existing at the time. The selected trail, route, or river may not be the scheduled one.
3. The decision regarding what equipment to take with them.
4. The decision to scout any river rapid, the decision to ascertain the difficulties or dangers of a mountain or trail, to determine for themselves whether to undertake a given risk or to attempt a particular challenge.
5. The decision whether to run any rapid, to complete the climb, and so forth.
6. The decision to pass up any opportunity to quit or turn back.

Cooperative Adventure trips *are not guided trips*. Typically they rely on volunteers to help "run" the trips. **These volunteer leaders are also participants**. They generally have more experience than the other participants, and therefore have willingly assumed greater responsibilities. However, it is important for the participant to understand clearly the responsibilities of both the leaders and the participants. One of most important responsibilities of the trip leader and the sponsoring outdoor program is to make sure that participants understand the philosophy of such a program and its trips and that they understand and assume some responsibilities for themselves.

The role of the "leader" in a Cooperative Adventure trip is to function as a trip coordinator to *assist the participants* in the smooth running of the trip, rather than to act like a guide who is directing or controlling the trip or its participants.

The coordinators (facilitators) *may or may not* do such things as gather information, publicize and promote a trip, or make decisions regarding where or when to go or do some activity. Self-reliance by the participants and cooperation among participants, rather than reliance upon leaders, are goals of leaders.

Generally, leaders will attempt to inform and educate participants regarding equipment or accepted safety practices, but being informed and educated is a two-way action. The participant needs to be willing to solicit and to accept information and to be educated. Ideally the participant, rather than the leader, is the person ultimately responsible for the participant's safety and well-being.

By making participants involved in the decision making process and asking participants to make the decisions and to accept (assume) the responsibility for their decisions, the ACA is attempting to reduce the liability risks for the parent organization, the canoe/kayak club. (The ACA also encourages the use of waivers.) The liability issue is a good reason for a program to adopt a Cooperative Adventure model.

Unlike in a true Common Adventure model, in a Cooperative Adventure model the leaders may be legally responsible, hence potentially liable. However, the emphasis in the Cooperative Adventure model is on the participants willingly knowing, understanding, and accepting (assuming) the risk. This is coupled with the use of a waiver. So long as participants do not perceive the leader to be insurer of their safety and they knowingly accept the risks, then the Cooperative Adventure leader is relatively protected from ordinary negligence liability.

Many clubs use the Cooperative Adventure Model. However, not all club trips are run under the Cooperative Adventure model. Some club trips may be run as a Common Adventure trip, and other club trips (especially climbing clubs) may be run autocratically (the Guide Service model), or they may provide instructionally oriented workshops or classes. A club activity may be run under any philosophy on the continuum.

Therefore, what Watters termed the Club model would be better termed the Cooperative Adventure model, for clubs are merely one type of organizational structure using the Cooperative Adventure model.

In his article, Watters noted Rennie's distinction between Common Adventure and Cooperative Adventure, but thought it to be just a variant of common adventurism. Rather, I suggest that the Cooperative Adventure model has evolved from the Common Adventure model into its own, and they are now distinct.

Cooperative Adventure trips are philosophically between Common Adventure trips and educationally based trips. Many clubs use the Cooperative Adventure format because it is appropriate for volunteer programs, which typically do not have the highly trained and skilled leaders which a guide service employs. Typically, Cooperative Adventure trips are more recreationally oriented, and not as content or process oriented as educational trips need to be, yet they provide structure and a degree of leadership for beginners and those who desire more structure than Common Adventurer trips provide.

Trips under the Cooperative Adventure model are more structured than those occurring under the Common Adventure model, but they necessarily are less structured than Instructional or Adventure Education trips (discussed below). They are less structured than Instructional or Adventure Education trips because, with the educational focus of those trips, participants are operating under constraints determined by the learning objectives and the educational focus of the course. The very nature of an educationally based trip, its learning

content orientation, precludes it from being a Cooperative Adventure trip. Common Adventure and Cooperative Adventure trips are generally more recreationally focused (Note 1).

A word of warning. Cooperative Adventure programs often use volunteer leaders. So do children's programs. The mere use of volunteer leaders does not make a program Cooperative Adventure, either for adult or children's programs. Especially with children's programs, due to the age of children and, legally, their inability to adequately understand and assess risks, leadership of children can not be as loosely structured as with adults. Leaders of children, even if volunteer, must still run under an Instructional or Guide Service model.

II

Under the category of "Instructional Programs," Watters conjoins programs which tend either to a) focus on instructing the technical activity skills (are Technical Skill Based) or b) have an experiential education focus (in the literature, these typically are called Adventure Education programs). I suggest that Adventure Education programs should be distinguished from Instructional Programs (Note 2).

Instructional Programs which are Technical Skill Based have as their primary goal the teaching of technical skills so the participant can be a safer, more highly skilled practitioner of the activity. The courses tend to be fairly highly structured, because the teachers have the students for a fairly short period time, and the goals of the course are limited primarily to the technical skills. These programs are typically conducted by guide services, community recreation outdoor programs, school and college physical education departments, and many college outdoor programs.

Paradigm examples of Adventure Education outdoor programs include Outward Bound, NOLS, and WEA courses. Adventure Education programs are concerned with more than the technical skills. They typically want to teach interpersonal leadership and working-with-people skills, and/or want to facilitate intrapersonal psychological growth and develop areas such as self-confidence and self-esteem. They tend to be educationally oriented towards both content and process. They typically consider themselves to be a form of experiential education (for discussions, see Miles and Priest, 1990). Because experiential education assumes that the learner must be actively involved in the learning process, in decision making, and in making choices, Adventure Education program leaders are much less directive than are leaders in a Guide Service program or a Technical Skills Based program.

In an Adventure Education program, participants have a greater measure of control over what they do in the program, and the educational goals are different. Another characteristic typical of many Adventure Education programs is that the degree of participant control may shift during the program. At the beginning of a 24-day course, leaders may be more directive; by the end, the students may be mostly in control of the decision making.

Thus, initially in an Adventure Education program, the leadership style may be more directive, more instructor oriented and Technical Skill Based; but as the participants mature and develop within a course, the program will move towards a Common Adventure/ Cooperative Adventure model. Therefore philosophically Technical Skill Based instructional programs and Adventure Education instructional programs are distinguishable. Adventure Education programs are intermediate on Watters' scale between Common

Adventure programs and Guide Service programs. With their emphasis on participant involvement, they should be placed to the left of Instructional Programs on the continuum; yet with their educational focus, they typically have more structure than a Cooperative Adventure activity.

NOLS, Outward Bound, and WEA offer paradigm examples of the Adventure Education model, but a skill based college outdoor program trip or physical education course (e.g., rock climbing) may well use elements of an Adventure Education philosophy, or may even consider itself to be using the Adventure Education model. A given program or outing may not clearly be one model or another; rather in characterizing a specific program, consideration must be given to the primary goals and philosophy of the trip, the involvement of participants, and the predominant leadership style of the leaders on that trip. Some particular trips or programs may not readily be characterized (Note 3).

III

I have suggested two changes in Watters' continuum: That Watters' Club model is more aptly called a Cooperative Adventure model; and that there is a separation between Adventure Education and other Instructional Programs. I have briefly explained the Cooperative Adventure model to show its place on the continuum between Common Adventure and Adventure Education.

Following is the revised continuum:

Least Organizational Control				Most Organizational Control
Common Adventure	Cooperative Adventure	Adventure Education	Instructional/ School	Guided/ Packaged

There is a need for outdoor programmers and leaders to be aware of the Cooperative Adventure model, in addition to the other models. It is important for both leaders and participants to understand the model they are functioning under, because which philosophical model a particular trip runs under serves as the foundation for expectations and actions appropriate for both leaders and participants on that trip.

Notes

1. This is not to say that learning does not take place. Learning does take place, and this can be demonstrated through research. But the learning is not structured, nor are learning experiences the foci of these trips.
2. It is important to remember that not all "Adventure Education" programs are to be considered "outdoor programs" in the sense this article is referring to. This article is concerned with "outdoor pursuits" programs, in contrast to programs such as "ropes course" or "challenge course" based programs.
3. As Watters pointed out, a particular organization may conduct trips or programs under more than one model. For example, a whitewater rafting program may run traditional Guide Service trips, and it may teach canoeing or kayaking under an Instructional model. (However, most rafting companies do *not* offer an instructional program.)

References

Guthrie, S. and Hutton, S. (1993). OVC program philosophy: A cooperative adventure. In unpublished *Leaders' Manual*. Outdoor Venture Center, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Miles, J. C. and Priest, S. (1990). *Adventure Education*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

Moss, J. (1996). Informal conversation at 1996 International Conference on Outdoor Recreation and Education.

Priest, S. (1991). New directions in adventure learning. *Journal of Experiential Education, 14*(2), p.5.

Rennie, J. (1985). An uncommon adventure. In Miles, J. C., and Watters, R. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 1984 Conference on Outdoor Recreation: A landmark conference in the outdoor recreation field* (pp.81-86). Pocatello, ID: Idaho State University Press.

Walbridge, C. C. (Ed.). (1986a). Club statement of individual responsibility. In *The American Canoe Association river safety report, 1982-85* (p.53). Lorton, VA: American Canoe Association.

Walbridge, C. C. (Ed.). (1986b). Proposed schedule/roster statement. In *The American Canoe Association River Safety Report, 1982-85* (p.54). Lorton, VA: American Canoe Association.

Watters, R. (1986). Approaches to outdoor programming: Four models. *The Outdoor Programming Handbook* (pp.13-26). Pocatello, ID: Idaho State University Press.

Watters, R. (1987). A model theory of outdoor programming approaches. In Meier, J. F., Morash, T. W., and Welton, G. E. (Eds.), *High-Adventure Outdoor Pursuits: Organization and Leadership (2nd ed.)* (pp.213-225). Columbus, OH: Publishing Horizons.

For further information, contact:

Dr. Steven P. Guthrie
Outdoor Recreation Program,
Unity College in Maine
Unity, ME, 04988
Phone: 207.948.3131 Ext. 213
Fax: 207.948.6277
E-mail: sguthrie@unity.unity.edu